

BAKERSFIELD, CA- Today, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Bakersfield) announced that a total of \$212,980 has been awarded to Kern County to fund a vertical prosecutor position in the Kern County District Attorney's Office. Funding was released by the United States Department of Justice through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG).

"We often overlook the need for prosecuting attorneys when it comes to fighting crime," Costa said. "More prosecuting attorneys in our courtrooms will allow our justice system to try and prosecute criminals in a swift manner. These funds are timely for Kern County and will be used effectively."

The Deputy District Attorney will be assigned to the gang prosecution unit in order to reduce gang violence and decrease the active participation in gangs. The vertical prosecution strategy emphasizes the assigned attorney will handle the case from beginning to end. Vertical prosecution has shown to improve conviction rates, reduce victim trauma and provide more consistent and appropriate sentencing.

The Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Program funding can be used for state and local initiatives, prosecution and court programs, technical assistance, training, personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support and information systems for criminal justice.